

BILL ANALYSIS

S.B. 907
By: Hughes
Culture, Recreation & Tourism
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

It has been noted that the Republic of Texas Granite Boundary Marker, which designates the former international boundary between the Republic of Texas and the United States, is considered by many to be a treasure from a period of Texas history that has very few tangible artifacts surviving. Concerns have been raised regarding the preservation of the marker and its protection from time, weather, and vandalism. S.B. 907 seeks to address these concerns by requiring the Texas Historical Commission to preserve, maintain, and improve the boundary marker.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE IMPACT

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly create a criminal offense, increase the punishment for an existing criminal offense or category of offenses, or change the eligibility of a person for community supervision, parole, or mandatory supervision.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, department, agency, or institution.

ANALYSIS

S.B. 907 amends the Government Code to require the Texas Historical Commission, to the extent authorized by law, to preserve, maintain, and improve the boundary marker and state land adjacent to the boundary marker. The bill defines the boundary marker as the granite marker designating the former international boundary between the Republic of Texas and the United States, originally placed in 1841 at its location in Panola County near Farm to Market Road No. 31, at or about specified coordinates, and known as the Republic of Texas Granite Boundary Marker and the International Boundary Marker. The bill requires the commission, to the extent authorized by law, to do the following:

- design and construct a structure or device sufficient to protect the boundary marker from vandalism, theft, and natural elements;
- display historical and educational information on a sign or plaque at the boundary marker site to inform the public of the history of the boundary marker and the region;
- cooperate with the federal government and other persons as necessary to facilitate the implementation of duties imposed by the bill; and
- take other action the commission determines necessary to preserve, maintain, restore, and improve the boundary marker and the state grounds adjacent to the boundary marker for the beautification and cultural enhancement of the property as a significant historical site in Texas.

S.B. 907 establishes that any power or duty related to the boundary marker formerly vested in another state agency is vested solely in the commission. The bill restricts the commission's spending of money that is appropriated to the commission for the bill's purposes to the accomplishment of those purposes. The bill authorizes the commission to solicit and accept gifts, grants, and donations of money or property from any public or private source to be used for the bill's purposes. The bill authorizes the commission, in consultation with each state senator and representative in whose district the boundary marker is located and other interested parties, to do the following:

- replace the original boundary marker with a replica boundary marker;
- preserve, maintain, and display the original boundary marker at the Bob Bullock Texas State History Museum; and
- perform the duties assigned by the bill with respect to the replica boundary marker at the original boundary marker location.

The commission is required to implement a provision of the bill only if the legislature appropriates money specifically for that purpose. If the legislature does not appropriate money specifically for that purpose, the commission may, but is not required to, implement a provision of the bill using other appropriations available for that purpose.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2019.